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VISIONS AND OTHER VERSE



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BY THE SAME AUTHOR :

SONNETS OF JOSÉ-MARIA DE HEREDIA
RENDERED INTO ENGLISH, Third
Edition ;

MOODS AND OTHER VERSES;
INTO THE LIGHT, Second Edition.

VISIONS AND OTHER VERSE



VISIONS
AND OTHER VERSE
BY EDWARD ROBESON TAYLOR



A. M. ROBERTSON
SAN FRANCISCO, MCMIII

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BY EDWARD ROBESON TAYLOR

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SAN FRANCISCO

TO
JAMES ADDISON QUARLES
PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE WASHINGTON
AND LEE UNIVERSITY
AND TO
LLOYD MIFFLIN
AUTHOR OF "AT THE GATES OF SONG" ETC
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

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NOTE.—Some of the pieces contained in this book were published in “Moods and Other Verses” (now out of print), others were printed for private circulation, “Memories” was published in the Impressions Quarterly, “Compensation” and “Into the Mystery” in the San Francisco Evening Post, while all the others now appear in print for the first time. Those heretofore printed have been carefully revised with especial reference to their insertion in this volume.

VISIONS



H OPE drew me on to peaks that glittered
bright

With lovelier tints than rainbows ever
knew,

While round my loitering feet rare blossoms
grew,

Steeped in the glories of immatchless light.

In golden opulence the days were dight,

With every sky cloud-free, save when there flew
Great flocks of dreams that veiled the pulsing
blue

Only to thrill me with a new delight.

Ah, this was in the time so long ago,

I marvel much if it be truly so —

Those memory-teeming, passion-hearted years.

My life's once blazing fires are burning low,

And in my cheek regret's unfathomed tears

Have worn the channels age alone can know.

IN TIME OF MAY



WITHIN thy silvern bars, oh, hold me fast,
 My Sonnet; — hold me safely, that my
 dream
 Of long-departed blooms on men may
 beam

In all thy artistry of splendor cast.
 To heart-enchancing music of the Past
 Again I loiter by the woodland stream,
 Till on its memory-haunted banks I deem
 Myself with joys in fairy legion massed.
 Once more I seek the walnut's easeful shade
 To lie outstretched in taskless freedom there,
 As all the ravishments of May are mine;
 Once more with her that in the grave was laid
 Long, long ago, I breathe the fragrant air,
 And pluck at her fond wish the columbine.

A SUMMER DAY



WHAT treasure trove the languorous
summer hours

When all their golden moments were
our own;

Beneath some tree's soft shade to drowsful
drone,

And build in Dreamland fairy-peopled towers!

The birds are dozing in their leafy bowers

Save the woodpecker tapping far and lone,

While dauntless bumble-bees make murmurous
moan

Among the blossoms of the drooping flowers.

The sun sinks down in clouds that seem his pyre;

And as the dusk is edging into dark,

And Hesperus faintly trembles into fire,

The lightning bug floats by—a glowing spark,

While then we hear—ah, now I hear it still—

The plaintive calling of the whippoorwill.

THE DAYS OF OLD



HERE let me put my daily burden by,
To live again one consecrated hour,
While sceptred Memory with increasing
power

Commands obedient pageant for mine eye:
Ah, what procession floats beneath my sky,
Of long-evanished joys in spring-time flower,
When boundless realms were youth's demanded
dower,
And all its troubles but a tear or sigh!
And she the fairest of the ghostly throng,
Who so entreats me with celestial gaze,
Leaps in my heart and trembles in my song;
O purple-gloried, haunting, hallowed days,
When she and I walked Love's enrapturing
ways —
She that in Death's cold arms has lain so long!

THE MASTER



FROM out his noble face there looked
an eye

Bespeaking mastery;—ah, I see him now
With gathered thunders on his clouded
brow

Whence lightnings leaped that none would dare
defy.

Yet kind and patient he, nor ceased to try
The veriest dunce with learning to endow;
But work half-done he never would allow,
Nor could he compromise with any lie.

And sweet to him the wine of joysome play
That sent the blood all tingling through the
veins

To drive the harassment of tasks away;
And now his years are done, there still remains
Such love for what he gave me of my gains,
It warms my heart as if new-born to-day✓

THE DREAMS OF LONG AGO



THESE dreams of mine refuse to let me
go,
And hold me fast with such entreating
face,
With such insistent fondness of embrace,
That once again I range the Long Ago;
Nor at this moment would I care to know
The Present's most rememberable grace;
My feet are bounding in the woodland race,
And everywhere Hope's ringing trumpets blow.
The unbounded forest and its streams are ours,
Its luscious fruits and nuts, its beauteous flowers,
With trees that lift their splendors to the sky;
While rare, melodious birds such strains prolong
That all the universe is filled with song,
And nought that breathes seems ever born to die.

FANCY'S CHILDREN



HERE do Fancy's children nest,
Breeding thoughts we love the
best?—

In the leaves with freshness gay
When the Spring is on her way,
Sweetly breathing balm and song
As she lightly skips along;
In the heart of daffodils
Beating as some fairy wills;
Honeysuckle giving sweets
To the trellis it entreats;
Poppies that for sunbeams hold
Most appealing cups of gold;
Pansies whose irradiant eyes
Watch the jasmine's envied vine
Near the maiden's casement twine;
Dandelion's stars that glow
In the meadow's emerald skies;
Lilacs of the long ago,
Tremulous with memory's sighs;
Roses grand in gorgeous show,
Marguerites that lovers know,
And in every kindred one

FANCY'S CHILDREN

Drinking joys of dew and sun;
Sooth, in least that decks the ground
Fancy's children may be found.
In the merryhearted stream
Where some naiads rest in dream,
While the crystal waters make
Drowseful music lest they wake;
In the peaceful pools that lie
Where the umbrage veils the sky,
And no voice on us may call
Save the beat of waterfall;
And in nook of secret dell
Where an oread from her cell
Deeply hid is wont to spy
Lovers' raptures throbbing nigh;
Here with all that's beauteous crowned
Fancy's children may be found.
In the dryad-haunted tree
With its branches spreading free,
Whose sequestered, cooling shade
Only dreams and we invade;
And in cloud of snowy fleece
Floating swanlike overhead
On its azure sea of peace,
By the zephyrs gently sped;

FANCY'S CHILDREN

Ah, in this enchanted ground
Fancy's children may be found.
In the horses of the surge
Rearing high upon its verge,
So to leap upon the shore
With impetuous, deafening roar,
While from out their mouths the spume
Seethes and hisses as it flies;
In the ships that faintly loom
Under rainbow-tinted skies,
Sailing safe on sapphire seas
To the golden port of Ease,
There unlading costly bales
For the hope that never fails;
Ah, in these domains renowned
Fancy's children may be found.
In the dawn's wide-opening rose
Which in sudden beauty blows
On the east's enraptured breast,
As it beams upon the bed
Where some lady's lovely head,
Filled with him she loves the best,
Gently stirs within its nest;
In the visions flitting by
When the day is fain to lie,

FANCY'S CHILDREN

Wearied out, in final rest,
On the bosom of the west;
In the stars that bless the night
With magnificence of light,
As the moon, like any ghost,
Glides amid their countless host,
Weaving with her silvery beams
Love's eternal, magic dreams;
Ah, in this capacious bound
Fancy's children may be found.
In the memories floating up
From the long-*evanished* time,
When with joy in every cup
All the moments rang in chime,
As with her, death would not spare,
Hand in hand we silent strayed
In the perfume-laden air,
Till a glory round us played,
And the beauty of her eyes,
Newly lit with love's surprise,
Told the story that still lies
In the heart where, wet with tears,
It shall grieve through all the years;
In the Garden of Delight
Boyhood's feet alone can know,

FANCY'S CHILDREN

Where all wonders fill the sight,
And all joysome blossoms grow;
Sooth, where fairies love to be
Fancy's children you may see;
But the maiden's guileless breast
Is by them beloved the best,
Where to every rapturing sound
Are they alway to be found.

IMAGINATION

How insignificantly small we seem;
 Yet marvellous times there are,
When every sense in sublimated dream
 Wings on from star to star;—
Ah, then all principalities are ours,
And we, immortals with Herculean powers.


WHAT IT IS THAT MAN SEES



WHAT dost thou see when without thee
thou lookest, O all-searching Man ?
Life, ever life, amid changes by multi-
plex rhythms controlled—
Rhythms that beat without end in immensity's
vastness of space,
Mingling and blending in chorus to sing of the
Order Divine.


What dost thou see when within thee, thou lookest,
O all-searching Man ?
Thee as a spirit and atom of all the mysterious
whole;
Giving as well as receiving, bound to the infinite
past,
Made by and making thy future that stretches
eternally on.

CAN THIS BE DAY ?

 CAN this be day ? The stars have fled;
Dawn's banners brighten overhead;
The wagons roll along the street,
And men go by with hastening feet;—
Ah, yes, it must be day.

But come and see where cold she lies,
Death's fingers on her once-bright eyes;
With pallid lips that cannot stir;
The aching mother bent o'er her;—
Ah, no, 'tis night, not day.

THE PITY OF IT

 OW bloomed round her the flowers of
nuturing care,
How breathed on her Home's kindliest
summer-air,
How softly smooth her daily paths were made,
From that sweet moment Life first gave her breath
Until that bitter time her dear head laid
Its liliated beauty in the lap of Death!

FEARS




MY heart was kept with fear astir
Lest lightest harm might come to
her;
My lips could not have dared to
speak
One word to pale her bloomy cheek.

But now my fears are gathered up
In grief's exhaustless wormwood-cup,
And though I spoke in loudest tone
Her cheek no paler hue could own.

MYSTERY OF MYSTERIES

In mystery's face I could but peer
When she my heart of heart did fill,
And yet her pulseless beauty here
Proclaims a mystery greater still.

WAIL

 FROM out a wood where waters ran
 As only joyful waters can,
 Where flower and tree with
 rapture heard
 The ecstasy of many a bird,
 And in the air was such a lull
 That everything of peace seemed full,
 I sudden came upon a cave
 With brooding gloom as of the grave,
 And peering in the darksome nave,
 Awe-struck I saw upon a stone
 A mother bowed in grief alone.

CHASTENING




WOMAN, great of form and face,
Who seemed to be of Sorrow's race,
Led me away from sun-bright air,
And from the trees and blossoms
fair,

To lonely depth of solemn wood
Where but the sombre cypress stood.

She gently breathed a wordless prayer,
Then left me strangely dreaming there;
And when I waked, a newer grace
Was round me as with love's embrace,
And forth I went in heartened mood
Beneath the spell of chastening's good.

FORWARD

HAT note is this which sweeps
Along the mountain steeps,
Where neither grass nor tree
Nor verdured thing can be ?

'Tis Life's great trumpet blown
By lips that heroes own :
"The death-strewn Past is gone —
The Present's yours ; — march on !"

ALL IS BEST

The world o'erflows its cup of woe,
Each heart has felt the knife of pain,
But I would have my soul to know
That all is best, that God doth reign.

HER RESTING PLACE



HE rests not where the bending
flowers
Can spill their perfumes over her,
But in the cells of loveliest flowers
Her fleshly atoms once more stir,
To give those blooms the brightest hue
That e'er before their petals knew,
While in the urn her ashes lie
White as her soul that cannot die.



ROSES FOR HIM

You that loved him, gather here
Round his bier.

Let the roses heaping rest
On his breast.

In his heart their sweets were hived
While he lived,

And he might unquiet be
If that we

Did not give his bed of death
Their dear breath.

Mid their fragrance let us say,
As we pray,

How he nursed a patient mood
Filled with good —

ROSES FOR HIM

Good that flowed without an end
To his friend;

How, whatever stress might be,
Equal he;

How with every breath he drew
He was true;

How he charmed us with a tone
All his own,

Stingless wit and ready sense
Flowing thence;

How he walked affection's ways
All his days;

And how Beauty's conquering art
Held his heart,


Till he seemed her very child
Undefined.

ROSES FOR HIM

Gather then with roses here
Round his bier,

And in heaps upon his breast
Let them rest.


SONG

 ALWAYS be the same, sweetheart,
Or we must forever part;
Smiles to-day and frowns to-
morrow
Can but bring us anxious sorrow;
Be the same as now thou art,
And we shall not, cannot, part.

Do I doubt thee?—never! never!—
Love shall bind us fast forever;
In thy softly-folding arms
Life for me can have no harms;
Pillowed on thy fragrant breast,
Come what may I must be blest.

WORK



 O age-worn palace veiled with vine and tree

I listless came one summer afternoon,
A self-invited guest who craved the boon

Of peaceful idlesse in that privacy;
And there I saw, as swung the doors for me,
Some of the inmates lounge as half in swoon,
While others gaped and yawned, tried trivial
tune,

Turned a few leaves, then wandered aimlessly.
And when Ennui, the jewelled queen of these,
Rose languid from her couch of popped ease,
With greeting such as indolence could spare,
I fled aghast, the humblest tool to seize,
And as its strokes with music filled the air,
Peace spread her wings in holy blessing there.

THE BALANCE



LOOK not on erring Man as one who teems
With illis that slay him: his ethereal
thought,
Thrilled by imagination's glorious
dreams,
Rears deathless fanes in gold and purple wrought;
His science tests and probes all things that are,
Piles fact on fact, and in its thirst to know
Dares lay its finger on the farthest star;
Beneath his hand, its purest wealth to show,
All forms of beauty exquisitely grow;
His wand of music bids all raptures rise,
Tears, and the passionate heart's supremest cries,
While Love's own fount wells joyous in his breast
With crystal stream to give the wearied rest.

DUTY


Duty is all in all; find it and then
Strike for thine own and for the souls of men.

TO MILTON



THOU star-crowned, peerless Milton,
 thine to know
 The moans and thunders of the surging
 seas;
 The tinkling laugh of rippling rills; the trees'
 Soft murmurs multitudinous; and so
 Thy deeply-wrought imaginations flow
 With long-drawn roll of mighty harmonies,
 As with dulcifluous, tripping melodies,
 In Beauty's unextinguishable glow.
 Thou art the starry wonder of thy time —
 The favored child of every lofty lore,
 And in thy soul, as in thy verse, sublime.
 Thou gavest England, when she needed sore
 Her strongest and her best, one man unique
 Who grandly blended Puritan with Greek.

MUSIC


 HE murmurous monotone of waving
 grain
 When winds are gently winging down
 the vale;
 The storm-voiced billows drowning men bewail;
 The pattering stroke of softly-falling rain;
 The sighing leaves which bend to every tale
 The breezes tell; the songster's lilting strain,
 From feeblest note of all the joyful train
 To rapturous burst of peerless nightingale; —
 What are all these, and all that human ear
 In sweetest concord from their kin can hear,
 But hints of deeper rhythms as yet unheard;
 That in the soul ineffable of things —
 An ordered music, by the eternal word,
 Throughout the vast of space divinely sings.

THE POET

He crushed his heart for wine of song
The sordid souls of men to glad;
But by him passed the scoffing throng,
Nor dreamed he was divinely mad.

TO WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT



WHAT gift of song was thine!—for in
thy great
Miltonic cadences the mighty heart
Of nature beats, anon with joy serene,
Anon with melancholy sad as leaves
By Autumn kissed, but alway with a hope
That sings its music to the darkest hour.
With thee we lose ourselves within the wood,
And make the tree our brother; every plant,
That spreads its modest beauties to the sun,
Or nestles in the shade, is then our kin,
And we with them on nature's kindly breast
In silence hearken to the voice divine.
The flowers of the field were thy dear friends,

Who spake their message to thee as to one
They trusted; and in swelling, golden note
Of sounding rhythm thou gavest it to us,
To keep enshrined within the heart of love.
All things that walk or fly could set thy soul
To music's beat, as did that waterfowl
Which caught thine eye, when in the vast
Of space's unimaginable waste,
Alone, yet confident, it took its way,
And where, through thee, transfigured and sublime,
It keeps forever an unwearied wing.



TO SAN FRANCISCO



CITY of our life and hope,
That sittest by this westmost sea,
Thy lovers pray thy widest scope,
And deepest in the yet to be.

May Learning's temples rear their towers
Above thy unpolluted ways,
And all the strength of all thy powers,
Build only what good men can praise.

May stranger ships bring costly bales
From every near and distant land,
And in return thy wingèd sails
By prospering winds be ever fanned.

May arts and crafts with newer life,
And greater, sing their highest notes,
While over all with glory rife
The flag of peace divinely floats.

MY SONNET PRISON



FULL oftentimes my friends have said
to me:

“Give o’er the sonnet, since thou dost
but lie

At leaden length beneath its narrow sky —

A slave imprisoned when thou mightst be free.

Though true it is the masters loved by thee

Have in that cage sung strains that cannot die,

Yet they were those who could all bonds defy,

And soar at will in Art’s immensity.”

Then I to them: “No eagle’s wings are mine,

That tempt the vastness of immortal song,


To rest at last on fame-encrownèd years.

Leave me my prison bars, to me divine,

Where with the Muse I have communed so long,

And on her breast have shed memorial tears.”

ADVERSITY

HEN glad Fortuna, as a friend to thee,
Her more than liberal spoils before thee
brings,
Beware the serpent, slyly hid, which
stings

The soul with poison of Prosperity.
Thou never mayst revealing visions see,
Nor mount with seraphs on immortal wings,
Unless within thy deepest being springs
Some tear-fed fountain of Adversity.
The steel that Florence drove in Dante's heart
He fashioned to a lyre, whereon with ease
He deathless rose above the hells of hate;
And when life-wearied Milton sat apart,
Lonely and blind, he swept those organ keys
Whose tones from age to age reverberate.

UNDER AN OAK



HE cloudless azure stretches overhead;
Afar the haze-veiled mountains tranquil
lie;

The breeze-kissed leaves are dancing in
the sky

As if by sprites of every joyance led;

The golden hay in many a mound is spread,

To ripen in the sun's all-glorious eye;

And rapture-hearted birds are twittering nigh

The oak where dreams and I have made our bed.

Yet here in bristling ranks the thistle stands,

With wingèd seeds in millions in its hands,


While now I mark a great hawk wheeling low;

And as I breathe this paradisal air,

My friend can but the pangs of illness know —

Bereft of joys that once he thrilled to share.

MOTHER'S LOVE


 S through the sweets of verse our talk did
 run,
 My friend said, "Cage me in thy sonnet,
 pray,
 A thought whose song shall tempt the Muse to
 say,
 Ah, this, indeed, is an immortal one!"
 "Is it," I asked, "a maid's fond heart undone?
 Or some far lesser grief? Or does the way
 To fairest memories open to thee?"—"Nay,
 'Tis Mother's Love—flame-hearted as the
 sun."—
 "Thou seekest what thou knowest is in vain,
 Although before me were a Dante's pen,
 Heart's blood for ink, with strength to make
 them mine,
 And though my sonnet bars their bounds should strain
 Beyond imagination's farthest ken
 Till bathed in all the ecstasies divine."

CHRISTMAS HYMN



CHRIST, on this thy natal day,
As oft before, we fain would pray;
And as the bells in laud of thee
Ring joyous over land and sea,
With every feeling sounding back
Along our lives' eventful track
That led from thee, ah, let us dare
To fill our starving souls with prayer.

Give us the passion-conquering might
In every stress to do the right;
And should we fall, as like we may,
Help us to front another day.
Add strengthening light to our weak eyes
For them to view fresh splendors rise,
And see that at our very feet
The richest things may lie complete.

Oh, lift us in thy blessed arms
Above the fear of loud alarms
To where the flower of courage grows
On hope-crowned heights that duty knows,

CHRISTMAS HYMN

Till thrilled with that divinest air,
No longer dreaming of despair,
We shall go on from day to day
Despite all lions in our way.

Oh, give to us such spirit-needs
As teach the scorn of hates and greeds,
And light within our breast the fires
Of wisdom-hearted, high desires;
Of love for all without constraint,
Of love that dares not halt nor faint,
Though it lead us, as it led thee,
Along the road to Calvary.

May we with thee so closely live
As that we freely can forgive,
Although our heart be torn by one
The best beloved beneath the sun,
And though the friendship built of old
With rarest gems and purest gold
Be prostrate laid, and we remain
In irremediable pain.

CHRISTMAS HYMN

O Christ, on this thy holiest day,
Accept our homage as we pray;
Upon us pour thy healing balm,
Till every pulse, serenely calm,
And tuned to love, undaunted beats
With harmony's ambrosial sweets,
While centred in our souls increase
The priceless treasures of thy peace.

QUESTION

Outside, the rain is dreary,
Inside, my heart is weary,
Outside, the winds are sighing,
Inside, my hopes are dying;—
O Earth, where is thy beauty?
O Soul, where is thy duty?

VISIONS AND OTHER VERSE

FAITH

Though man be lost in maze of mystery's land,
'Tis his to feel if not to understand,
And hear the heartening voice that ever sings
Of all the deep divinity of things.

WORK AND SERVICE

Through work and service thou mayst see
The inmost heart of liberty,
And make thy sum of days to be
One fused organic unity.

UNKISSED

O lips that moan unknissed
 Beneath Love's luring sky,
What raptures you have missed,
 What pangs have passed you by!

UNACCOMPLISHED



HE parcelled off from Beauty's vast
 demesne
 One little spot that seemed so very fair,
 He thought his soul might rest securely
 there,
 Triumphant in a spring of fadeless green;
 And in the distance looming clear were seen
 Great towers that wooed such empyréal air,
 They mocked alike man's ravage and his care,
 Beaming like stars eternally serene.
 Then came the Muse and whispered in his ear
 Seductive sweetnesses that so beguiled,
 He dared a tower of his own to rear;
 But scarce one dawn beheld it, when a wild
 Wind smote it, and in night that knew no gleam
 It crashed to fragments as a shattered dream.

TO CHARLES LAMB



H, many a year has fled, dear Lamb,
 since thou
 Tasted the bitter and the sweet of death,
 But Love thy name hath nurtured so,
 that now,
 As scarce before, it greenly flourisheth.
 Thou hadst sincerity without a flaw,
 And lovedst all so deeply and so true,
 Thou to the beggar and the sweep couldst draw,
 And see their hearts their rags and tatters through.
 Thou hadst no theories for wayward man,
 Nor sought to teach some lesson to thy kind,
 But livedst patiently thy little span,
 To hopeless ills courageously resigned.
 Thy writings leave us debtors evermore,
 But what thou wast makes still the richer store.

THE RECORD



WHEN thy stilled hands lie folded on thy
breast,
As some day they will be at death's
desire,

What praise could wake the silence of thy rest,
What censure rouse thy indignation's fire?
O moment incommunicably dread!
For then how mend life's slightest broken thread,
Or kiss to warmth the love by thee betrayed,
Or slay the least of those thy passions bred,
Or haste with joy some fallen one to aid,
And set the crown of hope upon his head?

What's done is done, on lines thyself hast laid;
Nor canst thou scape the forfeit to be paid:
No deed of thine can hope for funeral pyre,
Nor can Time's flood with still increasing ire
Erase one record thou hast ever made.
From man's memorial tablets it may fade;
But on the book the Eternal Justice keeps,
With omnipresent eye that never sleeps,
'Twill be emblazoned through unending years
Though grieved contrition shed a sea of tears.

IN A CHURCH




PILE-ROOFED and low it meekly
stands,
The loving work of loving hands,
And views, from out its cross-
crowned tower,
Its garden plot of tree and flower.

Within, madroña trees, love-slain,
With joy renewed live once again,
To hold, in still unwearied arms,
The naked ceiling's modest charms.

A holy hush is in the air,
As though the spirit's essence there
Had been distilled and entered all
That lay within the sacred wall.

The song is sung, the prayer is said,
The Book, and sermon thence, are read,
While from the wings of Peace outspread
The balm of blessedness is shed.

MYSTERY

HAT notes of mystery in our being
sound!—

The unimaginable depths of space;
The multitudinous worlds in pauseless
race

To distant goals beyond all dreaming's bound;
This orb of ours whereon man sits encrowned
A God and Devil—void of any place
Where Life and Death meet not in fierce
embrace,

To what deep purpose thought has never found.
There is no great or small: this grain of sand
Its secret holds, as does the shaping hand
Which fast cements it in the building's wall;
And this vain butterfly, that only can
In wingèd rapture hasten to its fall,
Mysterious is as thy great soul, O Man.

MAN'S HERITAGE



IMMORTAL Man, what treasure falls
to thee!—

The ages million-year'd whose life-
blood still

Flows through the channels of thy good and ill,
As will thine own through those that are to be;
The prisoned secrets yearning to be free;
The infinite-sounding harmonies that fill
All space and being; and that supremest Will
Which weaves the web of life's great mystery.
Dig where thou wilt and thou shalt jewels find,
As will thy brother in no less degree
Who searches centuries hence with deeper mind;
For thou art ruled by such divine decree,
And in the Eternal's breast art so enshrined,
Thy wealth can feel no bound's extremity.

OUT OF THE SHADOW



WOULD not have the world's regard-
less eyes

Rest on this verse made consecrate with
tears

For one who in the spring-time of his years
Sank down o'erburdened, never more to rise;

But those alone whose unavailing cries

Have risen like mine for all the heart endears

I would have here to pause, and in his bier's

Deep shadow share my bosom's agonies.

Yet as Grief hands the bitter cup around,

And deeper grows the shade's intensity,

Our souls may hear some new, far-falling sound;

And mid its throbs divine it then may be

That Life will stream with richer thought, and
we

Deem Death a monarch with effulgence
crowned.

POE



HE walked beneath the raven's wing
A wayward child in lightless gloom,
And there his trancing songs did
sing
And weave his haunting tales of doom.

He drank from Beauty's honey-cup,
Pressed to his eager lips by Art,
Until her nectar swallowed up
The very substance of his heart.

Upon her lines his structures grew,
In form most cunningly designed,
While demons that he nurtured slew
The peace and sweetness of his mind.

With hopeless sighs and bitter tears
He filled his sad, remorseful hours,
Yet reared the while, for all the years,
His beauty-crowned, enchanted towers.

TO WALT WHITMAN



THOU roughest-hewn of all the poet kind !
 Not thine to tinkle rhyme's melodious
 bell,
 Nor set to music of harmonious swell
 The thoughts that surged within thy shoreless
 mind;

Not these could Art to lightest durance bind,
 Nor sensuous Beauty with her deepest spell
 Entice them in her fair demesne to dwell;
 But formless, ruleless they as unconfined.

Yet, giant soul, thy loud-resounding lyre,
 Whose tones the wondering world still leans to
 hear,

Thrills every spirit that would dare to be
 Inflamed with that unique, immortal fire,
 Which made thee what thou wast — the grandest
 seer

And noblest poet of Democracy.

HOME




F earthly things thou top of blessings —
Home!

Safe refuge where the overburdened soul
Lays down its weary weight of toil and
care,

To softly fall into the arms of rest.
In deep dreams there the frets of life are hushed,
Its turmoils and its woes, while the stopped ears
Hear nought of clamor's unrelenting noise
That roars tumultuous in the world without.
And there the mistress of the blest abode
In sweetest tyranny serenely sways
Her silver sceptre over all the house,
Until each feverous, hesitating pulse,
Ruled by the music of her heartening love,
Beats to the measure of melodious peace.

AFTER AN EVENING WITH
LONGFELLOW

OULD I but mount with something of
thine ease,
And lightly wing the empyréal air
The muses breathe, I would not now
despair

To rise in praise of thee on lines like these;—
Now, when thy dulcet, fine felicities
All freshly lie upon my soul, and wear
A bloom so richly, beautifully fair,
They mock expression's subtlest alchemies.
No deliration ever mars thy strain,
No puling, weak complaining nor lament,
Nor formless numbers hobbling slow along;
But borne on waves of music, sweetly sane,
Serenely passioned, suavely eloquent,
It glows with witching art of noble song.


TO WHITTIER

I



SOME verse there is death cannot touch
 although
 It may not nest upon the loftiest height,
 To spread its pinions in untiring flight
 Where constellations in resplendence glow;
 Nor yet by Fancy fondly fellowed know
 Her fairy realms of exquisite delight;
 Nor with Imagination's stopless might
 Range the vast regions of our bliss and woe;—
 For it hath cradled in the human breast
 Feelings and thoughts with which we would not
 part;
 And hath in loving, saving strength possessed
 The power to move the universal heart,
 And so will be by all the muses blest
 As long as joys shall sing, or tears shall start.

II

UCH verse, O Whittier, thy muse
employs:

For thou dost sing in unaffected lay
Of maidens fair, of childhood's glorious
day,

Of natural things unmixed with base alloys;
Dost mint the gold that lies in homely joys,
And gently mov'st in such consummate way
The human heartstrings to melodious play,
That restful music drowns the world's mad
noise.

New England lives in thy delightful line:
There do her household hearths our love con-
strain;

There do her tales with freshened beauty shine,
Her fields, her woods, her skies, her stormy main;
While over all the Power we feel divine
Upholds eternal, universal reign.

POETIC ART



THE cities vanish; one by one
The glories go that glories won;
At Time's continuous, fateful call
The palaces and temples fall;
While heroes do their deeds and then
Sink down to earth as other men.
Yet, let the Poet's mind and heart
But touch them with the wand of Art,
And lo! they rise and shine once more
In greater splendor than before.

INSIGHT

One doubts, one fears, one calls on circumstance,
And one is blown by every wind of chance;
While yet another looks into his soul,
And sails serenely to his destined goal.

REVERIE



HAT realm is thine, thou gentlest ruler,
sleep!

All life obeys thee, while earth's myriad
graves

But point to where thy ageless banner waves,
And where thou dost unbroken vigil keep.

Innumerable messengers are thine, who leap

To do thy bidding—noiseless, nimble knaves,
Who bring from out thy many-chambered caves
Sweet dreams wherein the troubled brain to steep.

And from thy choicest chamber steals thy child

Poetic souls do know as Reverie;

'Tis she whose fingers set the spirit free,

So that from every fleshly hindrance isled,

It may with Fancy roam the woodland wild,
Or sail upon Imagination's sea.

TO A SOILED AND BROKEN VOLUME
OF BAYARD TAYLOR'S POEMS



COME, worthy waif, to my embrace;
Let me with gentlest touch erase
All soilure from thy pretty face,
Remove the torn and faded dress
That mars thy pristine loveliness,
And bid the binder clothe anew
Thy beauteous form, and there bestrew,
With hand by loving taste controlled,
His daintiest flowers of gleaming gold.
Then shall I gladly house thee where
The best of all thy kinsmen fare,
And who will give thee welcome room
Within the precincts of their home,
And where thine author sure would say
Thou hadst at last not gone astray.
There shalt thou have such tender care
The bitter past will be forgot;
And oft to thee shall I repair,
To thrill beneath thy glowing thought;
To follow thee at leisure times
For art-grown pearls in distant climes;

To have the sluggish feelings stirred
By many a music-singing word,
And mount with thee on lyric wings
Above the touch of sordid things.
Ah, then how happy shall I be
At thought of having rescued thee!

DEFIANCE

Despair, I do defy thee and despise:
Though seamed my heart with scars,
Yet will I press undaunted toward the prize
That blazes mid the stars.



ENDEAVOR

I



TILL am I tossed upon a troubled sea,
Puzzled and doubting how to make my
way;
Resultless day follows resultless day,
And even my dreams no solace bring to me.
At Duty's call, unheeding other plea,
Have I pushed forward, scornful of delay,
Not idly lazing in the lap of play,
Nor grieving over what might never be.
And now, the years seem shorter as they run,
Nor dares my life to hope for many more,
Or should they come, that they will truly bless.
The best that lay within me has been done;
And as an end all vainly I deplore
Endeavor's dreary waste of fruitlessness.

II



THOU wavering soul, what note is this
to sound?

Dost prate of Duty, yet art satisfied
With what thou hast in scarce half-
struggle tried?

Dost beat thy wings against thy self-made bound,
Forgetful that in Life's unresting round

All marvellously wondrous things abide

For him who seeks and will not be denied?

And that the humblest may be jewel-crowned?

O blinded one, unhood thy spirit's eyes,

So they may truly see the world without,


And that still other world which stirs within;

Then canst thou soar through Hope's enchanting skies

To peaks undarkened by the clouds of Doubt,

And where to Victory thou mayst be kin.

TO KEATS

 THOU art, O Keats, of all the poet race
The Muses' most immediate, darling
child;
They kissed thee at thy birth and fondly
smiled,

Foreseeing what thy splendors would embrace:
Enchantments man would never cease to chase,
And catch and catch again, and be beguiled,
Till filled with rapture he should be so isled
Upon such sparkling sea of fairy space.
Thou clear-eyed spirit! Thou miracle of song!
Greek and Elizabethan met in thee,
To shake thy soul with Beauty's ecstasy;
And though death would not let men hold thee long,
Affection twines her greenest round thy name
As loftier grows the column of thy fame.

TO SHELLEY

Bright seraph of the cloud and air,
Couldst thou have left thine eyry there,
And felt the earth beneath thy feet
Till life for thee was all complete,
Or had the waves not swept thee down,
Thou mightst have worn still richer crown;
But why regret?—thy lyric lay
Still wings its rapturing, skyey way,
While that brute world which gave thee blows
Now on thy tomb Love's roses throws.

REFUGE


The winds of Grief were driving him
 Upon the rocks despair had reared,
When in the distance, faint and dim,
 The Star of Poesy appeared;
And as toward her his face he turned
 With hope and courage in his breast,
She then with greater fulgence burned,
 To light him to the Port of Rest.

AT THE PRESIDIO OF SAN FRANCISCO



THE rose and honeysuckle intertwine
Their fond arms here in beauty's own
sweet way;
Here loveliest grasses never know decay,
And every wall is eloquent with vine;
Far-reaching avenues make beckoning sign,
Where, as we stroll in lingering, glad delay,
The trilling songster glorifies the sway
That gives to him inviolable shrine.
And yet, within this beauty-haunted place
War keeps his dreadful engines at command,
With scarce a smile upon his frowning face,
And ever ready, unrelaxing hand . . .
We start to see, when dreaming in these bowers,
A tiger sleeping on a bed of flowers.

NIGHT


 S oft of old, I watched the sun leap o'er
 The golden barriers of the farthest West,
 And saw the stars on heaven's deep azure
 breast
 In splendor blaze as never seen before;
 And then upon mine ear began to pour,
 In waves innumerable that knew no rest,
 The sharp, sweet notes of myriad ones that blest
 My inmost soul with more than music's lore:
 Unnoted these great stars glow all the day,
 Unheard these tiny insects chirp their lay—
 Eclipsed by louder sound, by brighter light.
 Thus many a sweet and patient one of earth
 Shines on, sings on, unmarked her priceless worth
 Till she has glorified Misfortune's night.

TRANSMUTATION

O heart, with bitter tears o'erbrimmed,
 Grief does not sit alone with thee,
 For Faith and Love with eyes undimmed
 With her keep tender company,
 Where, if thou wilt, this woe of thine
 May be transmuted to a shrine.

TENNYSON'S GOOD FORTUNE



IF all the poets never yet was one
 More blest by fortune than was Tenny-
 son :
 For half a century his pen so swayed
 The realm of Poesy that all obeyed,
 And owned he gave such jewelled song-words birth
 As could not well be matched upon the earth.
 His country held him closely to her breast
 As one in whom she was uniquely blest,
 While wife, and friends, and children, all were his,
 And spoils of wealth and noble dignities.
 He dreamed his dreams from clamoring man apart,
 His every passion centring in his art,

TENNYSON'S GOOD FORTUNE

And from his garden's quietude of shade
In calm contentment all the world surveyed,
Keeping his powers in such consummate bloom
They never seemed to wither or to fade.
And when had come the fateful hour of doom,
Good fortune still was his: the moonbeams made
Transfiguring beauty of his chamber's gloom;
The Master's music lingered on his lips
The latest ere his spirit passed away,
And sudden sunlight burst through cloud's eclipse
In golden glory on his confined clay.



IN NOVEMBER



THE year draws nigh the edge of death;
for see,

These dreary branches have already shed
Such myriad leaves, they lie in mounds of
dead

At foot of each sad-hearted parent tree.

Yet, grim and stern as human soul might be,
The scarred, gray sycamores with defiant head
Like warriors stand, while in its shrunken bed
The languid stream flows on resignedly.

Life is aweary and in quiet here
Would rest awhile her care-tormented brain,
As dreams she of the fast-departing year;
While Melancholy, led by Memory's train,
With pensive step now gently steals anear,
To dew the ground with sacramental tear.

THESEUS AND ARIADNE



WITHIN the labyrinth's depths the Minotaur,

Slain by the sword she gave, lay stark
and dead,

And with his finger following her thread

He issued forth to see the heavens once more.

Then Theseus swiftly from the hated shore

With Ariadne on his bosom fled,

Still hearing, as toward Naxos on they sped,

King Minos' cries above the ocean's roar.

Deep-nested in love's softest down they lay

When she to him: "Through me alone thy way


To century-sounding fame has now been won;

And yet I fear;—Oh, swear we shall not part!"—


"By Aphrodite do I swear, sweetheart!" . . .

Then rose portentous cloud and hid the sun.

ULYSSES AND CALYPSO

 OR that they slew the cattle of the Sun
 Ulysses' comrades sank to death while
 he,
 Borne on the billows of the friendly sea,
 Calypso's lovely isle in safety won;
 Where filled with soothing rest his days did run
 To murmurous music's luring notes as she
 Bound him in coils of such captivity,
 That but for Zeus his soul had been undone.
 The God's decree the enamored nymph obeyed,
 And helped the hero as his raft he made,
 While brimmed her heart with desolation's tears.
 His glimmering sail she watched till in the sea's
 Great void 'twas lost, then moaned because her
 years
 Were not as mortal as Penelope's.

NARCISSUS

 WAY from Echo's plaint Narcissus led
His steps where lay a moss-engirdled
pool,
And wearied stooped to taste its waters
cool;—

When down he sudden fell as if struck dead.
At last he gazed; then tried to clasp the head
And kiss the face so strangely beautiful;
Yet he but marred the mirror's waveless lull,
And wept to find his radiant vision fled.
No food he sought nor sleep; to gaze and sue,
Burned by the noonday sun and drenched with
dew,
Were his alone until his parting breath.
The nymph he scorned with kindly hand did strew
Sweet grass and bloom upon his bed of death,
And on the spot a flower immortal grew.

ORESTES



WHEN Agamemnon on the wings of fame
From conquered Troy to Clytemnestra
flew,
She kissed him as Ægisthus pierced him
through —

A pair of devils in immortal shame!
Orestes heard, and all his quivering frame
Surged with a wrath the Pythoness so blew,
That with his mother's blood he dared imbrue
The hand till then snow-white of any blame.
Whereat the snakes of torture round his head
Still closelier clung as on and on he fled
Before the vengeful, fierce Eumenides;
But when the Tauric Artemis he bore
To Argos' land, Athene's self did seize
The raging Furies, and they scourged no more.

TO GOETHE



GOD built thee on the noblest plan,
 Thou universal, fruitful man!
 No life there was thou couldst not feel,
 No learning thou didst not acquire,
 And these thine art did so anneal
 They glow as with perpetual fire:
 The heights of hope, the vales of fears;
 The agony of soul-drawn tears;
 The human heart in every guise;
 The weak, the strong, the fool, the wise;
 Beauty in all its good and ill;
 Temptation's snare, heroic will;
 Poor, erring man as on he goes
 Through hates and loves, delights and woes;
 All these did in thy passion throng,
 To breathe immortally in song.

Thy serious soul surveyed the all,
 Contemning not what seemed the small,
 Nor lost in mazes of the vast;
 While all thy years thou wisely wast
 The conqueror of thyself, who could
 Dispart the evil from the good,

TO GOETHE

And calmly sit above the show
Of froth and fume that raged below,
And with unique, compelling force
Ordain for man his proper course.
Thy piercing vision saw the springs
That lie within the heart of things,
And thy imperial voice shall sound
Its notes to earth's remotest bound,
To point the way, with good bestrown,
To Wisdom seated on her throne.



ARRIA



HEAR, and shake not, that thou art
decreed

By thine own hand to miserably die—
Now, when thy fortunes blossom and
the eye

Of fate beams bright as with prophetic meed;
And why shak'st thou in this thy spirit's need
When Death and Cæsar stand relentless by?
Arouse thy soul till thy defiant cry
Proclaims once more our matchless Roman
breed."—

"O wife, to close this day my book of years
Is unimagined pain; this proffered steel
The horror's sum of horrors unto me."—
"Give me the blade, that so thy griefs and fears
May drown in mine own blood. I strike . . .
and feel
No hurt, my Pætus . . . now the point's for
thee."

PERPETUA



MY father, plead no more;—wouldst have
 me wed
 Remorse in life, and then in flames to lie,
 When from the blood of Cæsar's circus I
 Can leap to Heaven to be chapleted?
 Has not our holy Saint Ignatius said
 God's wheat we are, that, for his purpose high,
 And in his boundless love, should be ground by
 The teeth of monsters into Christ's pure bread?
 Then welcome the arena's glorious ruth;
 I long to feel the lion's rending tooth
 Till all my body reeks with horrors fell.
 And yet, dear father, ere from thee I go,
 It touches me to think of that great woe
 Which will be thine eternally in Hell.

DANTE AND BEATRICE



WORLD-COMPELLING Dante, who
the sea
Of Poesy so stirred from shore to shore,
That even as yet its surging thunders
roar


In tones undying as eternity;
With master spirit so supremely free
It scorned all bonds and swept through every
lore,
On wisdom's pinions at the last to soar
To empyréal world of ecstasy!
The crown of sorrows with its thorns was thine;
But in thy bosom blazed the fires divine
That lit thy track to Paradise from Hell;
And she who gendered their supernal light
Has starred forevermore the magic might—
Disputeless miracle — of woman's spell.

EDELWEISS



O-MORROW from Zermatt we'll see
 the grand,
 Far Théodule and soaring Matterhorn;
 And then, O joy! as if for us just born,
 In luring nook the Edelweiss will stand." . . .
 The morrow's breeze the peak and glacier fanned,
 And fanned the form of her that crushed and
 torn
 Lay like uprooted lily pale and lorn,
 The fatal Edelweiss within her hand.
 Her body fouled with stains they bore far up
 From precipice's foot to church's arms,
 And would have earthed it 'neath memorial
 stone;
 But vain the offer of this final cup:
 For she who fled the city's roars and harms
 Now found that even in death it claimed its own.

TO BALZAC
ON READING HIS MEMOIR BY
MISS WORMELEY

 UNTIL I knew the story of thy years,
It did not seem titanic power like thine
Could have been found in merely human
mine,

Or could have mingled with life's hopes and
fears;

For thy great spirit so sublime appears

Among the kindred fellows of thy line,
That every Muse would hail thee as divine,
And Atropos for once distrust her shears.

'Tis so set down, yet strange I feel it still,
That thou wast not the demi-god I deemed,
But anxious toiler for thy daily bread;

Thy bosom racked with many a torturing ill;
And who, like others, when thy dreams were
dreamed,

Felt Death's dark angel settle on thy head.

NEAR MIDNIGHT OF DECEMBER
THIRTY-FIRST 1899



IN retrospective dream I watch my fire,
Erst bright with flame, to embers now
decline,
As thee, the youngest one of Time's long
line,
I see in his unfeeling arms expire.
And as thou sinkest down, war's clamorings dire
More horrent scream than when life first was
thine,
While man now drinks his brother's blood for
wine
With bestial, unappeasable desire.
Thou seem'st of evil wrought, but so did they
Thy vanished kin; yet man still holds his way
Through all the maze and tangle of despair;
Still Love uprears her palaces divine;
No deed's to do but finds some arm to dare,
And God still lets his stars in glory shine.

ON RECEIVING A BUNCH OF HOLY
GRASS



BECAUSE on festivals its leaves were
strown

Before the portals of the sacred fane,
'Twas holy called with one accordant
strain,

Till by that reverent name 'tis ever known.

So now, most worthy lady thou dost deign,

As Easter's music through the heart is blown,

To strew this grass before me as mine own—

Me, a poor singer, piping all in vain.

How joyed the mountain torrent where it grew!

What opulence of golden hours it knew

Where Solitude, unconquered, reigned alone!

Though lifeless quite, it still yields balmiest breath,

As some dear soul, in all the graces grown,

Exhales divinest perfumes even in death.

VOICES



FROM out the azure's depths serenely
falling
At times I hear celestial voices calling,
And then in spirit-flight
I soar from murky Night,
To seek their presence in the fields of Light.

And by their marvellous tones the air is shaken,
Until I feel my fearsome soul awaken
To faiths that set it free;
And calm as one might be
I dare to ask, what death can come to me?



FIVE SONNETS
SUGGESTED BY SOME PICTURES
PAINTED
BY WILLIAM KEITH

I

MORNING



DEEP-BROODING Night has done its
 worst and best,
 And once again we front the new-born
 Day,

Where now the sickled moon with lessening ray
 Hangs low upon the sky's auroral breast.
 The earth, soft-garmented in robes of gray,
 Drinks heaven's sweet dew with such delightful
 zest,

She fain would see time held a prisoner lest
 The sun should sweep her present joys away.
 Home kindles now her necessary fires,
 Whose shafts of smoke, that gently pierce the air,
 Like incense seem in worship of the Morn.

And as we list to these far-sounding lyres,
 So great all grows, so most divinely fair,
 The soul, fresh-winged, upsoars as if reborn.

II

BY THE ROADSIDE



FROM root to leaf each merry-hearted tree
 Breathes the sweet air as with divine
 delight,
 And even the clouds, o'ercome by
 beauty's might,
 But swell the woodland's deep-drawn ecstasy;
 And yonder horsemen jewelled in the light,
 Shout to the sky in wantonness of glee,
 As though for them no future could there be
 Of mad despair's insufferable night.
 With weary feet, and heart sore charged with woe,
 A woman sits the grass-fringed road beside,
 Deep in her soul the iron of the years.
 "Ah, joyous ones," she sighs, "could ye but know
 What bitter ruth will clip your soaring pride,
 Ye would return and blend with mine your
 tears!"

III

INTO THE MYSTERY




HE palpitating splendors of the West
 In mystery tremble through the wood,
 as Day
 With noiseless footfall slowly steals
 away

To Night's star-lighted palace and to rest.
 Save where the cavaliers spur on with zest,
 As if some fateful message to convey
 For leagues beyond, all sounds of sad or gay
 Lie stirless on the landscape's lovely breast.
 And should we ask these horsemen in their pride
 What word it is they carry on their ride,
 And what dear heart to hear it breathed would
 break,
 They sure would say: "Such word is ours alone;
 To Dreamland only is that loved one known;
 Yet we shall ride forever for her sake."

IV

MEMORIES

 HE darksome waves of all thy fourscore
years
Break on thy bosom's solitary shore,
Where mid the wreckage of memorial
lore

Sorrow sheds fast her unavailing tears.

As through the long-drawn time thy vision peers,
What hopes pass by that mock thee as of yore,
What fragrant blossoms, gone forevermore,
Lie heaped upon thy heart's uncounted biers!

Oh, tell me gentle lady, from thy chair,
That holds thee now in Memory's thraldom
chained,

Have nought but toils and pains been thy
increase?—

Ah, friend, not so: some of my days were fair;
Much have I lost, yet much have also gained,
And even in Grief's own cup have tasted peace.


V

THE UNCEASING ROUND



IN centre of the canvas see this pine
 All stark in death, with arms in vain
 appeal
 For what it nevermore can taste or feel
 Of joys of earth or of the heavens divine.
 Straight as in life it stands, still bearing sign
 Of noble majesty and dauntless will;
 While at its base its elder brothers spill
 Their ashes where the grasses kiss and twine.
 A great-armed redwood centuries have blessed
 Uptowers, while with bliss of life possessed
 The forest sings in grand, harmonious tone.
 And careless men pass by—the children they
 Of other children death has made his own,
 And who like them will strive and pass away.

BROWNING

 HERE was a Titan—one whose teeming
 thought,
 In unfamiliar channels, broad and deep,
 Flowed grandly on in undimished sweep;
 One who, by nature as by learning taught,
 In many a mine of human passion wrought,
 With such keen vision, such soul-searching ways,
 As ne'er were blazoned in the sight of men
 Save by his own and Shakespeare's sovran pen;
 One who met truth with never-flinching gaze
 As on he walked with Muse for loving guide;
 Who held his road, despite of blame or praise,
 In noble scorn of intellectual pride,
 And yet who could with any man be free,
 And in his breast some thing of beauty see;
 Who bore Faith's ensign, starred with heartsome
 hopes,
 Undaunted up Doubt's demon-haunted slopes;
 Who kept to earth the while his questing eyes
 Ranged all the reaches of the farthest skies;
 And who, with fame that purples every tide,
 Sleeps, where 'tis meet he should, by Chaucer's side.

TO THE SIERRAS



THOU beckonest to me and I come once
more;

Once more to lay my head upon thy
breast,

And feel thy easeful, all-sufficing rest
Body and mind deliciously steal o'er.

My soul so hungers for thy liberal store,
That every feeling with insatiate zest,
On thought's own wings by fancy's magic blest,
Leaves far behind the town's tumultuous roar.

'Twere joy enough to have thee once again,
If such possession were my very last
This side of death: to fly the haunts of men,
And mid thy solitudes outstretching vast,
To be as one with all thy countless brood,
Nor dare to question God's eternal good.

PROOF OF GOD



DOST ask for *proof* of God?—Thou
 mayst as well
 Ask of the daisy on its humble throne
 Whence, how or why its loveliness has
 grown;
 Or pray the world-compelling genius tell
 The secret cunning of his magic spell;—
 But when their hearts lie close against thine own
 Until their pulse-beats thrill thee to the bone,
 Doubt's demons perish in their self-made hell.
 The wings of Reason beat themselves in vain
 Against the ether of a soundless air,
 To fold at last in logic's dull despair.
 Divinely ordered is this fruitless lore:
 For were God *proved*, all mystery would be
 plain,
 And man himself, as man, could be no more.

TO THE SONNET



BOUND in the fetters of thy narrow frame
 What souls have conquered song!—
 Here Dante's woe,
 As Petrarch's, swells to joy; here Angelo
 Greatens the glory of his mighty name;
 'Tis here that Shakespeare bears his breast to blame,
 And here that Milton stoops, great strains to
 blow;
 Here Wordsworth's notes with rapturing music
 flow,
 While Keats divinely glows with quenchless
 flame.
 Yea, all the rhymsters of our modern day
 Crowd round thy shrine, and beg thee to enring
 Their brows with leaves of thy unwithering bay;
 Such crown is not for me, but prithee fling
 Thy spell upon me, so at least I may
 Yet dream of beauties I can never sing.

THE LAST JOURNEY

IN MEMORY OF PROFESSOR JOSEPH LECONTE
JULY 6, 1901

I



NOISELESS as fall of lightest thistle-
down
Upon the grass, Death's vast-winged
messenger,
Unseen of mortal eye, alighted where
Yosemite uprears her matchless walls,
And pours her cataracts from many an urn
In thunderous chorus of triumphant song.

II

Long have I waited, Death had said to him,
For one resplendent head that long has lain
In peace of love within the hearts of men,
But until now I dared not strike the blow;
For I am not all evil, as thou know'st,
And when I saw this man of noble soul,
In lovability beyond all words,
Give of his bounty each recurring year,
Enriching every place whereon he trod,
And making brighter all the air he breathed—

THE LAST JOURNEY

A very sun that conquered darkest cloud—
I shrank from sending my resistless dart,
That waits for all, against a head so crowned.
But now, as lies he in the arms of her
He long has loved—the great Yosemite;
As on his ear the thunder of her falls
Beats, and he lists with new-awakened joy;
As his observant eye once more beholds
Her streams, her trees, her towers and domes,
With all the myriad beauties of her floor;
And as he hears and gazes, his great heart
Bursts into raptures he cannot conceal;
As now his powers are ripened to their best,
And may begin to wane in sight of men;
'Tis good I do, not ill, to strike him down.
But do thine office gently on this man,
And let thy blow be quick and merciful.

III

The messenger obeyed; and he that was
So nobly crowned with life's supremest gems;
Who but a few short hours before had been
A very fountain whence outgushed a stream
Of most abounding and exalted good,
Lay like a clod—no light within that eye

THE LAST JOURNEY

Which once had challenged all the paths of space,
No speech upon that tongue which once had drawn
The hearts of thousands with its lightsome charm.

IV

The mourning Valley could not keep his clay,
But round it twined her garlands wet with tears
Of eyes that looked their lingering last on that
Which coffin-housed upon the wain was lashed.
As sank the sun behind the soaring domes,
And all the Valley's length in shadow lay
Sombrous and deep, she gave his body up—
Her walls in saddened gaze as ne'er before,
Her falls in muffled tones as ne'er before,
Her river sounding dirge as ne'er before.

V

The day's last breath was drawn, and brooding night,
With her procession of innumerable stars,
In new-born mystery spread her sable wings,
As now the dead and living, silent all
Save for the grinding of the wheels that toiled
Full slowly up the long, steep mountain-side,
Passed through the endless ranks of firs and pines.
The gloom of solitude was in their depths,

THE LAST JOURNEY

The gloom of solitude was in our hearts;
And what strange spectacle for them to see!—
The coffined form of one who had in life
Held genial fellowship with all their kind,
To pauseless pass in quiet of the night,
And he to them forever blind and mute;—
He that but scarce three days before had joyed
To see their needles dancing in the sun,
And had, in ecstasy of pure delight,
His very heart's blood mingled with their own.

Still on and on the living and the dead,
As brighter and still brighter shone the stars,
Passed through the darkness of the trees which seemed
As still as he that lay forever dumb.
The winds were sleeping in their distant caves
With folded wing; nor bird nor insect chirped,
Nor whispered any leaf. It was as though
The mountain and her brood in reverent hush
Were bowed before the loved, illustrious dead.

Then swam the moon with more than splendor bright
Up from the far horizon's edge, and shot
The forest's gloom with radiant, silvery threads;
And in that gloom all fairy forms were built,

THE LAST JOURNEY

And quick as built dissolved, and then rebuilt,
Of palaces and domes and dim arcades,
While thickening shadows threw fantastic shapes
Across the road where toiled the mournful wain.

Still on and on the living and the dead,
As higher and still higher soared the moon,
Passed through the forest silent still as he
That in his coffin all unheeding lay.
Yet we were near him, and his soul and ours
Communed through all the watches of the night:
We thought of what his work had been to man;
What seeds of inspiration he had sown;
What love for each created thing was his;
What meeds of glory he had justly won;
How bathed his soul in all the seas divine;
How quick his eye to find the fair and good,
How slow to see the ugly and the bad;
And then we thought of that poor fool who asked,
“Is life worth living?”

Paler grew the moon
As on and on the living and the dead
Still passed, the grieving forest left behind
Forevermore by him that voiceless lay.

THE LAST JOURNEY

And now the Dawn, the sweet, mysterious Dawn,
Showed her face dimly o'er the distant peaks,
Then with a clearer glow and brighter smile,
Till drowned and lost in the absorbent beams
Of that almighty Sun which rules us all.

NOW



H, do not wait till in the earth I lie
Before thou givest me my rightful meed;
Oh, do not now in coldness pass me by,
And then cry praises which I cannot
 heed.

If I have helped thee on thy weary way,
Or lightened in the least thy burden's weight,
Haste with love's tokens ere another day
Shall pierce thee with the fatal words, "Too late."
The present moment is thy time to live:
The Past is gone, the Future may not be;
If thou hast treasure of thy heart to give
To hungry souls, bestow it speedily;—
 For sweet Love's sake, let not to-morrow's sun
 Tempt thee to wait before thou see it done.

WITH THE LARK

Ah, mark
That Meadow Lark,
With note so silvery sweet,
Skimming the golden sea of wheat
As blithesome Dawn, in rosy-hued array,
Shakes out the banner of the new-born day.
Still on he goes with rapturous glee,
A floating fount of melody.
Oh, that my heart like his could beat
In thoughtless joy complete;
That under this balm-breathing sky,
Without one question why,
My soul in ravishment might rest
On Beauty's radiant breast.



WITH THE EAGLE

His eye
Sweeps all the sky,
As hard he grips the rock.
Storm's ice-clad brood that round him flock
But blow the fires of his undaunted breast,
And forth he fares in ecstasy of quest.
Still up he goes, to proudly fling
His own against the thunder's wing.
O Eagle of the mighty heart,
Give me of what thou art:
Breed in my soul thy lofty air,
That it may nobly dare,
And with unconquerable will
Face every darkest ill.



ATTAINMENT



WE sigh for things we scarce may hope to
gain,
And which, if all our own, would give
no peace;

We vainly toil and struggle to release
To knowledge nature's secrets; we complain
That 'tis not given us to break some chain,
To scale some peak, to win some golden fleece,
To do some mighty deed whose light shall cease
Only when moons no longer wax and wane.
'Tis thus we empty all the springs of life,
To lose the blessing at our very hand:
For Faith and Love, with glory as of sun,
Illume the path to Peace through every strife;
No work is futile that is nobly planned;
No deed is little if but greatly done.

CONCENTRATION



MARK how the florist's cunning hand
compels
That weed unique, the strange chrysanthemum,

To crown one lonely stalk whose blossomed sum
To giant size and gorgeous beauty swells—
The forces pulsing in its myriad cells
Combining, as with certainty of doom,
To build the structure of a single bloom,
Wherein the plant its dazzling triumph tells.
So shouldst thou have the will, O struggling soul,
To hold thy thoughts and actions to the pole
Of one predominant, exclusive aim;
Then may *thy* stalk a wondrous blossom bear,
Which shall for thee achievement's glory wear,
And be to others as a sign of flame.

SUFFICIENCY



LET vulgar Malice work its venom'd will
 Against the heart that would as steel
 have stood
 To shield the thing which strikes it; let
 the brood

Of Envy swarm like bees a-hiving, and distil
 Poisons more sure than those of Borgian skill;
 Let Friendship wither, and a common good
 No more be nourished by her nectared food;
 And even dear Love insanely stab and kill.
 Let all this be, with ills as yet unguessed;
 And still, thou shalt as ocean wind be free,
 If bravely thou dost seek thy strength and rest
 Within thyself, bending compliant knee
 To Conscience only, and in peace possessed
 Of that all-crowning grace—Humility.

ENDURE THOU FALTERING SOUL



NDURE, thou faltering soul, thou
shouldst endure:

Though thou hast toiled and served un-
blest of gain;

Though clamors mock thy peace; though
fortune rain

Deep-wounding blows on thee, past hope of cure;
Though hearts grow cold, while griefs have made
thee poor

In all save tears, till cumulative pain

Dare proffer ease with death's too-tempting bane,

E'en then, despairing soul, thou must endure.

For lo, behold! all fellows are thy kin

From vastest sun to tiniest atomy;

Yea, all that was, and is, and shall be, in

The mystery-breathing, great immensity,

Where thou art challenged for thy needed
part—

Then forward, with fresh courage in thy heart!

CONSECRATION



WOULDST thou make happiness thy
 life's fond aim?
 Wouldst walk self-satisfied those paths
 alone
 Where fortune's perfume-freighted gales are
 blown?
 Or toil for men to adulate thy name?
 Wouldst madly seek the things by pleasure strown,
 Unheeding all their emptiness and shame?
 Or dare the fabric of thy soul to maim,
 Could lucre's millions only be thine own?
 If yea, oh, let that angel one austere,
 Called Consecration, lead thy wandering feet
 Where blessedness may evermore be thine:
 Christ's gift she is—to man so wondrous dear
 In service by her spirit made complete,
 That Peace is hers eternally divine.

COMPENSATION



LLIMITABLY vast the ocean rolls
 Before me as its wreck-strewn shore I
 tread,
 And in its depths I view the unnumbered
 dead

Who stare for aye at unaccomplished goals.
 So, round the earth my sorrowing sight controls
 The sea of life with waves from slaughter red,
 Which heave forevermore above the bed
 Where lie the hopes and aims of myriad souls.
 Yet in that ocean's breast the pulses beat
 Which send rich blood through every country's
 veins,
 To serve the good whatever may befall;
 And in this sea Joy still the heart constrains;
 Here Duty's jewels lie; and here Love's seat,
 Divine as that which broodeth over all.

BEATITUDE



THRICE blest is he, who, when Death
comes
To bear him off from all the dreams of
earth,
Can look serenely in his awful face,
And hear the summons with complacent smile;
Who, looking back on his memorial years,
Can see the trees of undeclining green
Rich with the golden fruitage of his deeds,
That hate and envy would no longer touch;
And who, with blessings on the ones he loved,
And those who loved him in his worldly walks
Where he dispensed the goodness of his heart,
Can speak his last farewell without a sigh,
And fall asleep as some outwearied child
In soothing peace upon its mother's breast.

MY MUSE



F that my Muse can never hope to soar
 Above the summits where unwasting
 snows
 Are fellows of the stars;—if that she
 knows

No swelling note of forest, sea, or shore;—
 If e'en no streamlet of melodious lore
 The tiniest craft of hers divinely shows;—
 Or not for her the lightest breeze that blows
 In voiceful harmony Parnassus o'er;—
 Yet her dear self I could not think to chide,
 Nor deem her less than some anointed saint
 Who guards my soul: sufficient unto me
 If in my deepest being she abide,
 To hold my wandering thoughts in sweet con-
 straint,
 And all that's noblest give me sight to see.

SCORN NOT THE SINGER



SCORN not the singer though his tremu-
lous lay
Ring not along the arches of the sky,
Content the daisy's lowly sweets to try
As o'er the mead it wings its modest way;
For nectar-laden it may chance to stray
Near some lone heart that beats to hopeless cry,
And yielding sweetness as it passes by
Give strength to struggle for another day.
O Poesy, thou mightiest of the Nine,
Now more than ever do we need the aid
Of e'en the humblest votary of thine;
Now when, as old ideals begin to fade,
In stress of doubt we question the Divine,
And mid its splendors dare to be afraid.

DREAM



IT may be that in some auspicious hour,
When all life's currents run serenely free,
A voice will come from Dreamland unto
me

Upborne on music of celestial power.

Then in the garden of my heart some flower

May burst to bloom in sudden ecstasy,

And with delightful, deathless fragrancy

Add mite of glory to the Poet's dower.

O soul, thou feedest on the husks of hope,

And starvest while the things within thy scope

Lie all before thee in their bounty strown.

And still, ah, let me for at least to-day

Enjoy the vision ere it melt away,

To be with other dreams forever flown.

WHITHER



H, my songs belovèd,
Whither do ye go?—
O belovèd Poet,
That we cannot know.

Who can tell what roses
Will to-morrow bloom?
Or what wings be folded
In relentless gloom?

We abide the future,
As the greatest must—
Sure to find the laurel
Or be less than dust.



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